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What is centering prayer?

Question: "What is centering prayer?"

Answer: A centering prayer is an initial step of a [contemplative prayer](#). Both of these are part of the tradition of [lectio divina](#), a form of Christian meditation.

In the centering prayer, the practitioner focuses on a word and repeats that word over and over for the duration of the exercise. While centering prayer is done differently in the various groups that practice it, there are similarities. Centering prayer involves choosing a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within. Centering prayer usually includes sitting comfortably and, with eyes closed, settling briefly and silently, introducing the sacred word. When a centering pray-er becomes aware of thoughts, he/she is to return ever so gently to the sacred word. The centering prayer is followed by a period of opening one's mind, heart, and soul to the influence of God—the contemplative prayer.

Although this might sound like an innocent exercise, this type of prayer has no scriptural support whatsoever. In fact, it is just the opposite of how prayer is defined in the Bible. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and

petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" ([Philippians 4:6](#)). "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" ([John 16:23-24](#)). These verses and others clearly portray prayer as being comprehensible communication with God, not an esoteric, mystical meditation meant to clear the mind of thought. A centering prayer is more like mystical chanting than true communication with God.

Recommended Resource: [The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution](#) by [R. Albert Mohler Jr.](#)

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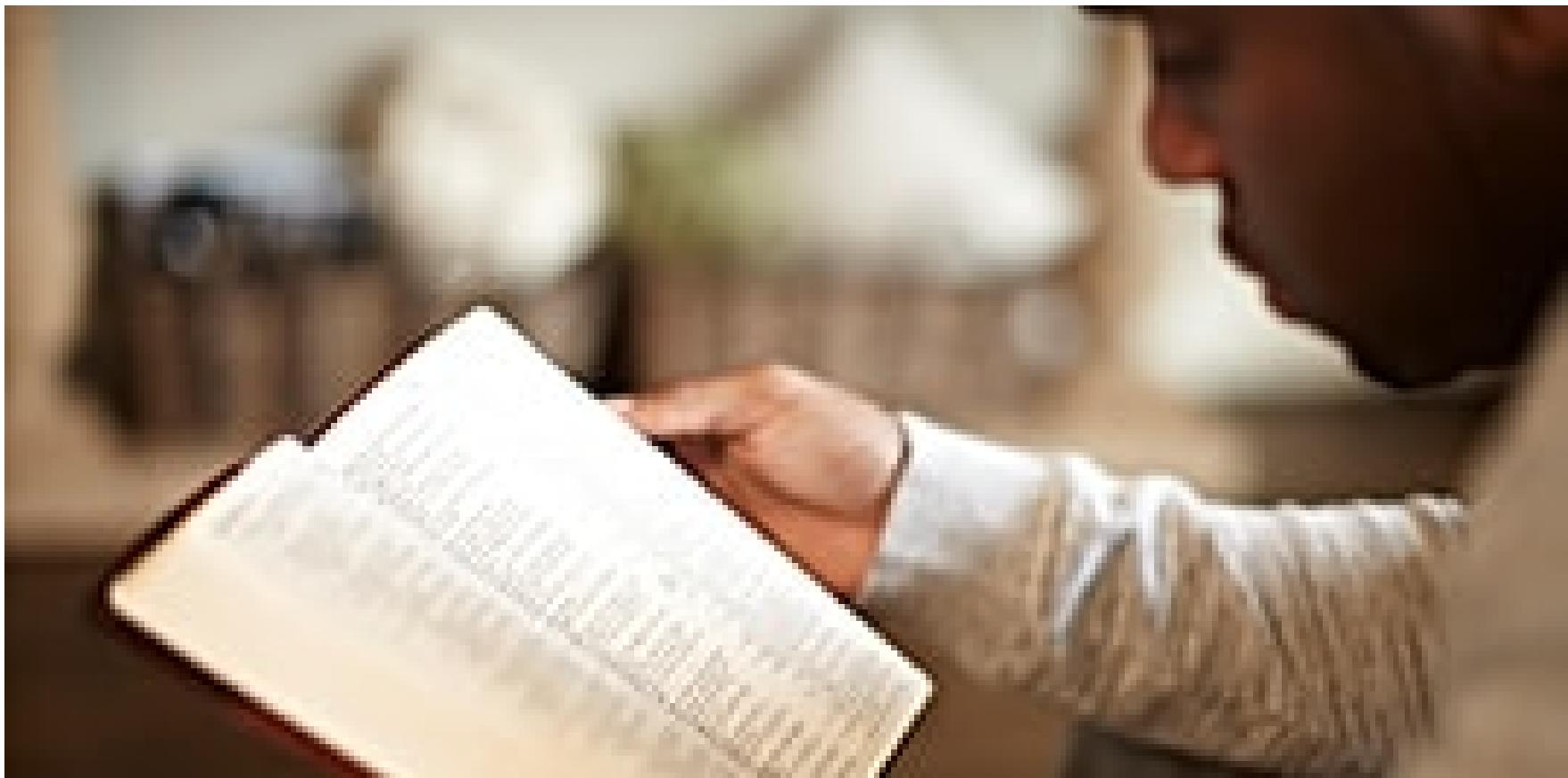
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